

Communists Get a Confession Out of Me

(EDITOR'S NOTE—This is the fifth installment in the amazing exclusive account of the author's experience at the hands of Communist agents. Miss Hammerstein was released on March 26, 1964, after serving 27 months in Russian and East German jails.)

BY GABRIELE HAMMERSTEIN
(as told to Peter Hahn)

NEW YORK (NANA)—I stood, completely without clothes, in the prison's "reception center." Despite the warm May day, I shivered.

"The prisoner will make five knee bends—hands straight out in front," commanded the chief matron in crisp German. Then she walked slowly toward me as I followed her order. "So you are the American spy," she chorled.

After a thorough search of my body and clothes, she handed me my "prison kit"—a discarded army uniform, dyed blue, toothbrush, plastic cup, straw mattress—and I was marched to cell number 127 of Hohenschonhausen, interrogation center of the East German secret police.

In a manner of speaking, the matron was right. I had been arrested on January 2, 1962, after having duped the Soviets into believing I spied for them by feeding them homemade "secret documents." I had done this for more than a year, while singing at the East Berlin Opera House, because I didn't want to lose my chance at a singing career. I had become involved in the East-West intelligence war when U.S. agents asked me to report on contacts with the Reds. But I had been "dumped" by the U.S. when the Russian KGB asked me to spy for them. This was the reason for my engagement in phone "espionage."

After five months in Russian KGB—secret police—jails, I had confessed to the deception. As soon as the KGB was satisfied that the "agents" they had been chasing were non-existent, I had been handed to the East German "Stasi"—Ministry for State Security (MFS)—for "process ing."

The prison was spotlessly clean. It held nearly 1,000 persons of different nationalities among them Swiss, West Germans, Italians, Frenchmen—and two Americans: A "man from California," as scumtious had it, and myself.

INTERROGATION FACTORY
One three-story wing of the U-shaped prison plant was used to interrogate the inmates. Its ground floor was used to question "Self-stellers," self-confessed "criminals" against the state. These "volunteers for punishment" were well treated and usually given short sentences. The third floor of the interrogation wing was reserved for East German nationals caught attempting to escape, or "internal subversives." The second floor was used to give the "treatment" to those who

were accused of espionage for the western powers. I was among this last group.

Prison routine was keyed to let prisoners have contact only with their cellmates, guards, and questioners. My cell mate was a girl accused of spying for the British. Since she is still behind bars, I don't want to dwell on her case.

Unless we were being interrogated, we had to sit on a wooden stool in our cell. Talking was prohibited, but nothing was written down.



GABRIELE HAMMERSTEIN
Confessed of Spying

use, such as walking or lying down. We were awakened at 6 a.m. Ersatz coffee and two slices of bread were breakfast.

Two other watery meals were pushed into our cells during the day. Five minutes "exercise" in six-by-twelve-foot pens, guarded by Tommy gunnary soldiers on a catwalk overhead, completed the daily routine.

"Lights out" was ordered at 10—no overstatement, because the strong overhead floorlights would flicker on briefly every five minutes through the night. This measure was designed to prevent suicides, the same reason we were usually kept two persons to a cell. Still, we heard of at least one suicide a month, sometimes accomplished by biting one's own veins at the wrist. This, and similar information we heard on the "prison telegraph."

I MEET A COUNTRYMAN
All through the day, the walls of the prison were alive with subdued tapping. The inmates communicated—tediously, but effectively—by tapping out the letters of the alphabet in numbers. This is now I "met" the other American prisoner.

I had found out that he was in a nearby cell, when—while contemplating my crimes—I heard a scuffle in the cell above me, followed by a muffled, but distinguishable old-fashioned, four-letter American expletive. It was a password—and it sounded wonderful to me. Headless of the guards, I climbed on the small table in our cell and, placing my mouth as close as possible to the window above, I belted out the lyrics to "I am an American..." in my best Wagnerian baritone. By the time the guard

came rushing, I was sitting quietly on my chair again, staring into space. They were used to my singing—in defiance of prison rules, of course—so they just called me "American shut" and went away again.

Almost immediately, my countryman started banging on the wall. "A-R-E Y-O-U M-F-R-I-C-A-N?" I answered "G-A-A-B-R-I-E-L-E H-A-M-M-E-R-S-T-E-I-N N-E-E-Y-O-R-K-K." "J-E-A-N L-O-B-A-L-L-I-F-O-R-N-I-A," came the

reply. In the weeks that followed, we swapped case histories and experiences, even memories of hotdogs and coke.

Loba had been arrested for helping several East German friends escape to freedom. Later, he was discovered while tapping out a message to me and moved to another cell. We were to "meet" the same way again, after I was sentenced, waiting for transfer to a penitentiary.

My interrogation, in the meantime, continued along the same lines as my questioning by the Russians. When I ended my brief stint for the CIA, I had given the CIA a complete report on my activities for them. And somehow, probably through a double agent, the KGB had got its hands on it. So I admitted to my deception of the Russian intelligence net.

THE DREADED WATER CELLS

My questioner was a cynical young lieutenant, whom I called "Bubli"—German for "inexperienced young whelp." All our conversations were taped and transcribed. He forced me to sign the transcripts, most of which I was not allowed to read. But I refused to admit more than I had told the Russians even when he threatened me with the "Water cells," where prisoners had to stand in water up to their noses for days on end.

Summer was getting on, and I felt that I would soon come out. All my demands, either to see a U.S. military liaison officer, or to see a lawyer, went unheeded. I felt terribly abandoned. So I decided to take action, and hoped that it would cause enough trouble—I would

be sent to a prison hospital.

I smashed whatever I could get of the cell furnishings, with the result that my cellmate and I were transferred to another cell where we were allowed to read.

We smashed the furniture here too, and won a second transfer and additional privileges. (This happened only because I was a "foreigner," and because the MFS was accountable to the Russians in turn, wanted nothing to happen to foreign nationals in their hands, which they feared might reflect on the fate of Soviet prisoners in Western jails.)

Lieutenant "Bubli"—I never learned his real name—was curious, but could do nothing. So I continued to defy the prison routine as best I could. Then one day late in July, he handed me my indictment, and told me to take it to my cell for study, because my trial was to be held on August 3. The charge sheet contained these counts:

- 1.—Espionage against the "socialist brother states."
- 2.—Successful, active penetration of Soviet security. (Yet I was to be tried in an East German court!)
- 3.—Recruitment of East German citizens for U.S. intelligence. (This charge referred to an East German friend who had turned against me, and volunteered information of this nature.)
- 4.—Misleading the security forces of all the "socialist brother states," and keeping them from performing other important tasks.

Some of the charges were so ludicrous that I almost laughed out loud.

KANGAROO COURT TRIALS

But the East Germans mean business. Two days later, I was driven to Neustrelitz, a filthy transient jail crawling with vermin—and the next day to Neubrandenburg, where the trial was scheduled. Here I discovered that my family had arranged for Dr. Vogel, the lawyer who helped to effect the exchange of U-2 pilot Powers against Red master spy Rudolf Abel, to represent me in court. My trial, incidentally, was to be held "under exclusion of the public—for state security reasons."

We were the first to arrive at the courthouse. Half an hour later, the judge and two "lay judges" whose only legal qualification was membership in the Communist party—appeared behind the bench. Then the lady prosecutor walked in, followed

by interrogators. The judge opened the proceedings, and told me that "my lawyer had not shown up." Then he blithely proceeded with the trial. I asked whether I could make a statement. He nodded, and I got up, saying, "I am an American citizen. Since my government does not recognize the existence of the so-called 'German Democratic Republic,' I cannot accept the jurisdiction of this court."

Still, the trial proceeded. The judge read the indictment, and asked me to comment on several points, which I refused. Then the prosecutor started a long harangue on socialism, referring to my "heinous crimes," and to my "having bitten the hand that fed me." Then she demanded a penalty of six years.

The court recessed for lunch. When the session was opened again, the judge put on a little black hat, and said: "The prisoner, Gabriele Hammerstein,

has been found guilty of the charges brought against her. In the name of the people, I sentence her to serve six years at hard labor."

(Next: I feign insanity and win freedom, at last!)

Pro-German Americans Win Applause

MUNICH, Germany (UPI)—David I. Hoggan, an American historian who claims the British started World War II, won applause when he spoke before an invited audience here Sunday.

But Munich University canceled a public lecture yesterday by Hoggan, 41, of San Francisco State University.

Hoggan's book, "The Enforced War," attempts to clear Adolf Hitler of blame for World War II. It was published first in Germany and has won praise from German right-wing groups.

One of these groups, the "German Cultural Foundation for the Spirit of Europe," staged Hoggan's lecture Sunday night.

Slight Problem

BRAINTREE, Mass. (UPI)—For five months the St. Thomas More Church Mothers' Club saved 660 books of trading stamps to buy a new station wagon for the Sisters of Nazareth Convent.

It was discovered yesterday one of the nuns knew how to drive. The sister superior said when a speeding bus an into a tree and turned over at Pedda village, 20 miles from Hyderabad, India.

Road Specs Available For Project

Contractors have been advised that revised plans and specifications are available for the construction of approximately two miles of roadway to connect U.S. Highway 85 with the access road to the Atomic Energy Commission's Nevada Test Site.

Bids for the construction will be opened at 2 p.m. PDT on May 27 at the Nevada Operations Office in Las Vegas.

Plans and specifications may be obtained from Tyson Engineering Co., Inc., 1209 Commerce Street, Las Vegas. Total cost of the construction is estimated at approximately \$100,000.

Four bids ranging from \$149,000 to \$268,000, were received when the project was offered for bids in April. Because all bids exceeded programmed funds for the work, they were rejected and plans were revised.

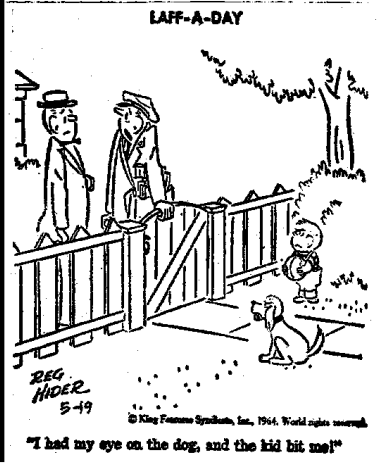
The roadway is part of a highway improvement program between Las Vegas, the Nevada Test Site, and the Nevada Test Site, and the State Road 16 turnoff to Johnnie and Pahump. The entire program is scheduled for completion this calendar year.

Both Wives Killed

RIECALL, England (UPI)—The young wives of twin brothers were killed yesterday when their car was hit by a train at a grade crossing. Mrs. Irene Stott, 22, and Mrs. Patricia Stott, 23, were killed. Their husbands, Arthur and Bernard, 22, were slightly injured.

Twelve Killed

BOMBAY (UPI) Twelve persons were killed and 30 others seriously injured yesterday when a speeding bus an into a tree and turned over at Pedda village, 20 miles from Hyderabad, India.



"I had my eye on the dog, and the kid hit me!"

GAS